

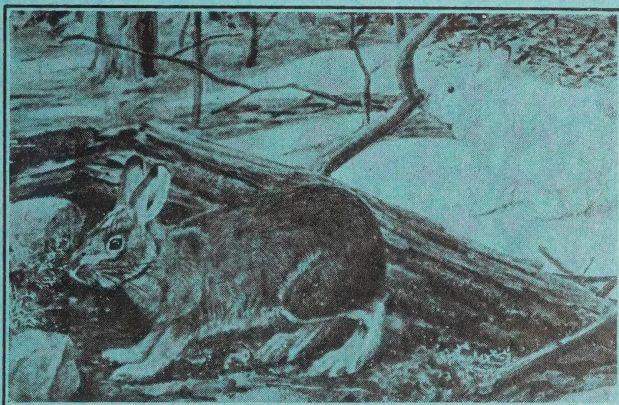
CA20X
LF
-M51



ONTARIO

Monthly Bulletin

DEPARTMENT OF
GAME AND FISHERIES



VARYING HARE OR SNOWSHOE RABBIT

HON. G. H. DUNBAR

Minister

D. J. TAYLOR

Deputy Minister

DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISHERIES

TORONTO - ONTARIO

HON. G. H. DUNBAR, *Provincial Secretary*
Minister in charge of Department

D. J. TAYLOR, *Deputy Minister*

Published to stimulate interest in the conservation of the Wild Life Natural
Resources of the Province of Ontario

VOLUME ONE

DECEMBER, 1945

NUMBER TWO

Editorial

On Earth Peace!

For the first time in many years we are able to contemplate a Christmas in which the expression of our faith is a reality and not just a fervent hope. The "long lane" of anxiety, suffering and sorrow has been successfully turned and around the corner we have emerged into the sunshine of a new era which has for its foundation Peace and Security to men and nations.

In retrospect we look back over almost six years of the blackest period in the history of the world; interminable days and months during which the tragedy of war continued with merciless fury. Never during that period did we lose hope or faith in ultimate victory, but there were times when the outlook was black and our morale correspondingly low. Now, however, "the lights are on again all over the world," and in the joy of the festive season we herald the approach of a new year with great expectations.

Fortunately for the world, and democracy, the Peace is a victorious one. The forces of oppression have been laid low, and it is contemplated that never again shall their ugly heads be raised above the level of a common humanity. This great victory enables us to readjust our lives to the peaceful pursuits of our national economy, happy in the knowledge that our physical and material resources have not unduly suffered. In those lands over which the storms of war raged so incessantly, whole cities have become rubble heaps, and millions of homeless and broken people are wandering among the ruins seeking succor and finding little to appease their wants. For them the present is illumined only by the initial rays of hope, but these are gradually expanding and assuming the characteristics of a new economy based on human rights and backed by the strength of all peace-loving nations.

As the year ends, many thousands of our men and women have returned from the devastation of Europe, and other fighting fronts, to be happily reunited with their friends. This repatriation of active service personnel will continue until every man not scheduled for occupational duty is returned to his home.

Each municipality is desirous of honouring its soldier citizens by establishing a permanent memorial in the community. Much originality is being displayed in the choice of these. Already almost every town and village has a monument of stone or granite dedicated to the memory of those who died in the last war, but it is felt that on this occasion the memorial should be of a more practical kind; something which will not only honour the dead, but also serve to ensure the welfare and happiness of the living. The Dominion Government is leading the way with a plan to beautify the capital city. Other towns and villages are contemplating the erection of hospitals, recreation centres, community halls, public parks, etc., as the needs of each dictate. All of these are appropriate and in keeping with the spirit of the age.

Characteristic of our way of life is our love of the out-of-doors. The aesthetic and recreational possibilities of forest and field, lake and stream are an inspiration and invitation to a freer and fuller life, while the character building influence of the outdoor environment is an important factor in the development of good citizenship.

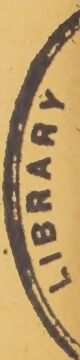
The men who fought to protect this heritage and make it secure for posterity have by their courage and valor firmly established the great outdoors as a memorial to themselves. It is symbolic of peace and the finer things of life. Let us resolve to maintain it as such, remembering always that our freedom to enjoy it has been re-established at a heavy cost.

With the nightmare of the past six years deeply etched in our memories, but with a large measure of joy in our hearts, we approach the New Year fully cognizant of its possibilities for mankind if we but measure up to our responsibilities. May the spirit of Peace pervade the earth in the new era upon which we are embarking, so that there may be no reservations in our hopes and prayers for a Happy New Year.

A Brief History of Departmental Administration

PART I

The history of departmental administration of the wild life resources of the Province is an interesting story of progressive development in the scientific and practical application of the principles of conservation as applied to a not unimportant part of our natural resources. Prior to the creation of a department of the public service under the direction of a Minister, the game and fish resources of the Province had been more or less neglected in so far as any serious attempt to regulate or control illegal taking was concerned. It is true that the Commission which functioned prior to the advent of the Department of Game and Fisheries materially changed the situation, but there was still much room for improvement. Fish and game were plentiful and the common idea was that these resources were inexhaustible, as a result their protection was given little consideration by the public, a fact which made control more



difficult. There were certain laws in effect which were reasonably sound, but the necessary machinery for enforcing observance was lacking. As a consequence wild life was being destroyed faster than Nature or the feeble efforts of man could replenish it, and a situation of grave economic import was fast developing.

In 1890 a Commission was appointed to investigate the fish and game situation, and make such suggestions and recommendations as were thought necessary for the protection and perpetuation of the resources. The findings of this Committee are a matter of public record, but it is pertinent to note that, among other things, it recommended the establishment of a permanent Game and Fish Commission. In 1892 an Act was passed embodying many of the Committee's recommendations and placing control of the resources in the hands of a commission consisting of five members, all of whom, except the Secretary, were to serve without compensation, other than actual disbursements. The appointment of this Commission ended the first period of Game and Fish administration which had functioned under the nominal jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Crown Lands.

It should be noted that during the period to which the previous reference applies there had been a division of control over the fisheries between the Dominion and the Province which led to a great deal of administrative confusion. The Federal Government claimed that Fisheries and Fishing Rights and all property therein were vested in the Dominion and on that assumption proceeded to make regulations and collect revenues in respect to such Fisheries. The Province of Ontario disputed this right and a settlement of the respective claims was sought through the Supreme Court of Canada. The Supreme Court and later the Privy Council swept away most of the claims of the Dominion and presented a judgment which held:

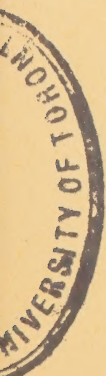
"That the beds of all rivers and lakes (which had not been granted) were the property of the Province in which they were situated;

"That the waters of such rivers and lakes, and the fish therein, were also provincial property;

"That the sole right to issue fishery leases, licenses and permits to fish, and to receive fees for such leases, licenses and permits, was vested in the Province exclusively;

"That a Provincial Legislature is **not** empowered to enact fishery regulations and restrictions, either generally or unless and until the Dominion Parliament sees fit to deal with the subject;

"That a Provincial Legislature is empowered to deal with fisheries in so far as they fall within the description of property and civil rights, or within the description of any other subject assigned to Provincial Legislatures; and



"That a Provincial Legislature may impose a license duty on fishing in order to raise a revenue for provincial purposes."

It will be noted that while the rivers and lakes and the fish therein were recognized as provincial property, the Province was not empowered to enact fishery regulations and restrictions generally, until the Dominion Parliament "sees fit to deal with the subject." This right still remains with the Dominion and as a consequence the Provincial Fishery Regulations are enacted by the Dominion Government, upon recommendation of the Province.

The Commission already referred to exercised control for several years until it was superseded by a Department of Government known as the Department of Game and Fisheries. The opening paragraph of the first annual report for the year ending 31st of December, 1907, explains the authority for the creation of this Department and is as follows:

"This being the first report of the Department of Game and Fisheries it will be in order to give the cause or reason for merging what had previously been two departments. During the Session of the Legislature of 1907 an Act was passed entitled 'An Act respecting Game, Fur-bearing Animals and Fisheries of Ontario,' which enacts as follows, viz.: 'The administration of this Act and of all matters relating to fish and game in the Province shall be under the control and direction of the Minister and shall constitute a branch of the public service to be known as the Game and Fisheries Branch.' The Act further enacts: 'The Board of Game Commissioners of the Province is hereby abolished.'"

Thus the Department was constituted and took over its administrative duties during a period when conditions were somewhat difficult because of previous neglect to properly evaluate the economic and recreational worth of the resources and provide those measures of replenishment and control which are essential to wise use.

The first Minister was the Hon. J. O. Reaume, Minister of Public Works, and the Deputy, or Superintendent of Game and Fisheries — to give him his official title — was Mr. E. Tinsley.

As administrative policies will be dealt with separately, it is sufficient here to give the names of the respective Ministers and Deputy Ministers who have piloted the Department through the turbulent seas of political controversies and public criticism to the comparative calm of economic stability, organized control, practical and scientific replenishment and public approval.

1907 to 1913 — Hon. J. O. Reaume, Minister.
E. Tinsley, Superintendent.

1914 to 1918 — Hon. F. G. Macdiarmid, Minister.
A. Sheriff, Deputy, 1914-1915.
D. McDonald, 1916.

1919	— Hon. F. C. Biggs, Minister. D. McDonald, Deputy.
1920 to 1922	— Hon. H. Mills, Minister. D. McDonald, Deputy.
1923 to 1931	— Hon. Chas. McCrea, Minister. D. McDonald, Deputy.
1932 to 1933	— Hon. Geo. H. Challies, Minister. D. McDonald, Deputy.
1934 to 1944	— Hon. H. C. Nixon, Minister. D. J. Taylor, Deputy.
1944	— Hon. G. H. Dunbar, Minister. D. J. Taylor, Deputy.

(To Be Continued)

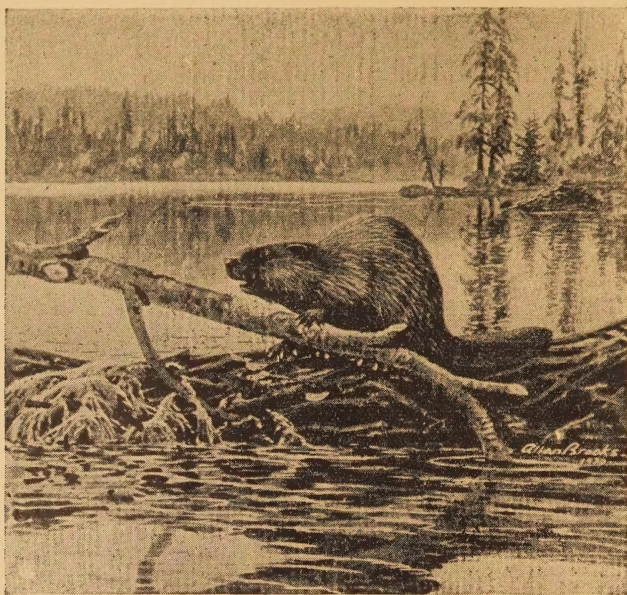
The Beaver

In the development of Canada and the opening up of its vast hinterland the beaver has played an outstanding role. More perhaps than any other animal it symbolized the fur trade with which is associated the early history of the Dominion, and in recognition it has been made a National emblem. It was in search of beaver, for the most part, that those hardy pioneers of the fur industry ventured into the hitherto unexplored lands of the north, and established trading posts from coast to coast, and north to the Arctic Circle, blazing trails for the future development of the country.

"When the vanguard of the 'Adventurers' came to Hudson Bay in 1670 the first returns of trade consisted almost exclusively of beaver pelts," wrote an officer of the Hudson's Bay Company. As a result, the standard of value for purposes of exchange was based on "one large beaver skin prime," and from this valuation a system of tokens was devised covering all kinds of furs.

The general appearance of the beaver is too well known to require more than passing reference. In form it is broad, heavy and somewhat clumsy out of the water, and walks with a waddling gait; its body just clearing the ground and its broad tail mostly dragging upon it. In the water, however, its movements are free and graceful as this is its natural element. The fur consists of a dense shining smoke-gray down, concealed by a long, coarse guard hair which lies smooth as if combed, and in season is of a chestnut brown colour. The colour of the pelt varies in some localities. The fine fur is from one-half to three-quarters of an inch in length, while the coarse guard hairs are from one and three-quarters to two and a half inches long.

The economic value of the beaver is of a two-fold nature. Its pelt is still one of the most valuable of our raw furs, while its natural aptitude for building dams is an important factor in water conservation. Fre-



BEAVER AT WORK

quently, of course, the energies of the beaver are misplaced in so far as the farmer is concerned, because the damming of a creek may result in flooding agricultural lands and preventing their use. When this happens the Department arranges to destroy the dam, live trap the beavers and transfer them to a different area.

The danger of over-trapping with regard to the beaver is fully recognized and necessary steps have been taken for its protection and control. In the Province of Ontario no definite or general open season is provided. This gives an opportunity for taking stock of the situation each fall, and where circumstances warrant, an open season of suitable duration is provided by Order-in-Council. In order that such trapping may not seriously deplete the stock, a limit is placed on the number of pelts which may be taken by each trapper.

Most of the beaver pelts taken in the Province come from Northern Ontario and in this connection it may be of interest to note that during the past few years steps have been taken to replenish large areas in this section with beaver. These areas comprise four large sanctuaries located in the James Bay, Albany River Districts. Through arrangements with the Hudson's Bay Company and the Department of Indian Affairs, the trapping of beaver in these protected areas has been suspended for a period of five years or more, and during that time each sanctuary will be restocked annually with from fifteen to twenty pairs of beaver.

Unless unforeseen circumstances develop, these additions to the areas mentioned, plus the natural reproduction from native stock, should result in greatly increasing the beaver population. When these areas are again open, trapping will be restricted to Indians residing in the Province. This will ensure a wider margin of security for the natives of the district who eke out a more or less precarious living in the barren lands of the North.

This year an open season for beaver has been declared throughout a large portion of the Province from December 1st to December 21st, both days inclusive. Most of the area which will be open to trapping is situated in the northern and northwestern section of the Province, although several eastern counties are included. Each licensed trapper may take no more than ten beaver during the complete season.



BEAVER HOUSE

An important part of the regulations in connection with the taking of beaver is the section which states:

"It shall be unlawful for any person to shoot or spear any beaver, or to cut, spear, break or destroy any beaver house or beaver dam, or to set or place any trap closer than five feet to a beaver house."

The approximate number of beaver taken during the 1944 season amounted to 38,107, and represented a value to the trappers of \$1,368,041.

Egg Production of The Northern Pike

An interesting pamphlet has come to our desk from the Institute of Fisheries Research of the Michigan Department of Conservation. It describes in detail the result of experiments to determine the egg production of the Northern Pike (*Esox Lucius L.*) and the percentage survival of eggs and young on the spawning grounds. The writer is William F. Carbine. The following extracts will be of interest to sportsmen, as the Northern Pike is annually becoming of greater importance as a game fish in this Province.

"In 1937 the writer started an investigation of the life history of the Northern Pike. The aim was to devise procedures for the management of this important game fish. Particular attention was paid to egg production and to the survival of the young from the time of hatching until the time when they leave the spawning grounds since little information was available on these phases of pike life history.

"The work was begun in southern Michigan, but most of the field observations were made from 1939 to 1942 at Houghton Lake, the largest inland lake in Michigan and one of the most productive.

"During 1939, 1940 and 1942 the writer and various staff members of the Institute for Fisheries Research secured at Houghton Lake thirty specimens of Northern Pike for the making of egg counts. . . .

"Shortly after its capture each fish was weighed to the nearest gram or ounce, depending upon the size of the fish. Standard and total lengths were measured in millimeters, and the ovaries were removed and preserved in 10 per cent. formalin. Actual counts of the eggs were made on all thirty specimens. . . .

"The actual numbers of eggs contained in the thirty females ranged from 7,691 (for a fish having a total length of 15.7 inches and weighing 11 ounces) to 97,273 (for a 35-inch pike, weighing 170.5 ounces). The following are average figures; numbers of eggs produced, 32,200; total length, 23.6 inches; weight, 49.8 ounces. The average total length of the fish in the sample agrees closely with that of all females which entered the spawning grounds.

"The number of eggs increases rapidly with increase in length and is roughly proportionate to the weight. In fish of any particular length or weight, however, it varies greatly. . . .

"In the management of any species of fish knowledge of the natural mortality and of the probable yield from any spawning is obviously important. It is desirable to know at what stage of development the mortality rate is highest. In the experiments described in this paper a complete count was obtained of all Northern Pike migrating from Houghton Lake to the spawning grounds under observation, and in 1939 and 1940 complete counts were made of all young migrating from the marshes

to the lake. It is possible, therefore, to present figures indicating the survival of the young from the time of egg deposition until the last young pike had migrated from the marshes (a maximum period of 82 days from the time the first fry hatched in 1939 and of 85 days in 1940). Each year a portion of the young were fin-clipped before they were released in Houghton Lake in the hope that an estimate could be obtained of the percentage survival from the fingerling stage to that of legal size. Unfortunately so few captures of these fish were reported (voluntary returns only were available) that this experiment was abandoned.

"The eggs and young of the Northern Pike suffered an enormous mortality on the Houghton Lake spawning grounds that were under observation in 1939, 1940 and 1942. The approximately four million eggs estimated to have been spawned in 1939 yielded only 7,239 migrating young—about 1,800 young for each million eggs. The mortality was computed to be 99.82 per cent. In 1940 about 700 young resulted from the deposition of a million eggs (mortality, 99.93 per cent.), and in 1942, 4,400 young were produced per million eggs (mortality, 99.56 per cent.).

"The stage at which the greatest loss occurred was not determined. Observations in the marshes and ditches proved that very large numbers survived through hatching and the period of yolk absorption. As many as twenty very young pike were caught in a single dip of a small scap net. Gradually the numbers of young dwindled. Predation, including cannibalism, was observed, but the loss from each of many causes was not estimated.

"A very high mortality during the fry stage was also observed in the pike-propagation experiment conducted in 1937 at the Ortonville Rearing Pond of the Drayton Plains Fish Hatchery of the Michigan Department of Conservation. This three-acre pond was stocked with approximately 150,000 Northern Pike fry on May 3, 1937, and when it was drained on October 14 (171 days from the date of hatching) the total number of pike recovered was only 362. The mortality from the fry stage was 99.76 per cent., virtually identical with the average mortality of 99.77 per cent. estimated to have occurred during the egg and early fingerling stages on the spawning grounds of Houghton Lake."

The Era of Salmon In Lake Ontario

The Ganaraska River, which flows into Lake Ontario at Port Hope, was once famous for its salmon, which were found in large numbers at the mouth of the river. The following is taken from the official report of the recent survey of the Ganaraska Watershed.

"The Ganaraska, teeming with salmon in the early days, supplied the settlers at the river's mouth with quantities of food. It took no sportsman's skill in those days to land the salmon, since spearing by torchlight was the usual method employed.

"Two stories of early fishing give some idea of the quantities of salmon in the Ganaraska about 1800. The first tells how, in 1801, James Sculthorpe, together with an uncle, speared three hundred salmon in one evening, for which the two men refused fifty dollars. The second describes how Sculthorpe—who was the famous fisherman of the settlement—and a youth named Taylor, one evening entered the cove near the mouth of the river. Taylor—who was subject to convulsions—had a fit and fell overboard, upsetting the boat. Finally, he was found on the hillside to which he had crawled and, during all this commotion the fishing boat was forgotten. The following morning it was found half a mile downstream, lying bottom up on the shore. Upon turning it over, it was found that thirty-two fine salmon were wedged into it—presumably under the seats. The shoal of salmon, probably having been alarmed by the commotion on shore, had rushed downstream, carrying the upturned boat with it."

Another interesting description of the conditions which existed in those carefree days is gleaned from a special report by Messrs. Whitcher and Venning to the Department of Marine and Fisheries dated June 30th, 1869. It concerns a creek known as Wilmot's Creek which entered the lake in the adjoining township to that through which the Ganaraska flows, and is as follows:

"In early times it was famous for salmon, great numbers of which frequented it every autumn for the purpose of spawning. They were so plentiful forty years ago that men killed them with clubs and pitchforks, women seined them with flannel petticoats, and settlers bought and paid for farms and built houses from the sale of salmon. Later they were taken with nets and spears, over 1,000 being often caught in the course of one night. Concurrently with such annual slaughter, manufactories and farming along the banks had obstructed, fouled and changed the creek from its natural state, and made it less capable of affording shelter and spawning grounds. The yearly decreasing numbers at length succumbed to the destruction practiced upon them each season from the time of entering the creek, until nearly the last straggler had been speared, netted or killed."

Wild Life Pets can be Dangerous

The young of wild animals have a very strong appeal for the average person. Like babies, they appear so helpless and dependent they command sympathy and seem to solicit care. In their immature state they are, in the words of the modern adolescent female, "terribly cute," and this is frequently sufficient excuse for seizing them and carrying them off as pets. Every year a considerable number of baby animals are taken from their native habitat by well-meaning but ill-advised persons and held in captivity in an environment which is foreign to their nature.

One of the principal points overlooked when these "cute" little mammals are taken home as household pets is the fact that—if they

survive the transposition from their natural surroundings to the artificialities of human existence — they ultimately grow up, and are then neither as cute nor as docile as they were when very young. In fact, the older they become the more cantankerous grow their dispositions. At this stage they are potential "booby" traps loaded with dynamite, which are liable to go off on the slightest provocation.

Recently the Department received a letter requesting that steps be taken to remove a buck deer from the civilization it has enjoyed for several years and return it to the wild, or otherwise dispose of it. The story is that it was found by one of the local farmers apparently helpless and deserted. It was then a mottled fawn, soft to the touch, attractive in appearance and with an appealing look in its eyes. It would surely die if left to its own resources, reasoned the farmer, picking it up and carrying it home. There were young folks at the home and plenty of milk to satisfy its normal appetite, so before long it was apparently happy and contented. In a short time it had the run of the place without any restraints; in fact, it very frequently sauntered into the village, where young and old delighted in making a fuss over it. It permitted the boys to tease it and the girls to pet it without any signs of resentment; in short, it became one of the attractions of the community for residents and visitors alike.

You remember the story of Mary and her little lamb, and how it followed her to school one day, to the very great amusement of the teacher and pupils. Well, Mary's lamb had nothing on this once mottled fawn now grown to adult stature and sporting a nice head of antlers. This fall it began following the children to school, but it was quite noticeably becoming restive. It began to resent the teasing of the boys and the petting of the girls. Nature was beginning to assert itself over and beyond the life to which it had become accustomed. The call of the wild was stirring its emotions, the gland scent was strong in its nostrils; somewhere in the nearby forest its own kind were beckoning, and the challenge to combat for pride of possession was slowly permeating its otherwise docile disposition.

It was as if it had suddenly realized the strangeness of its environment, and that these poor humans were no longer a part of its life. It followed them as a matter of course, but resented their familiarities. This resentment began to assume a serious aspect, and it was in order to prevent accident or tragedy that the Department was being asked to remove this one-time pet to new and more natural surroundings.

Cases of savage attack by so-called pets are common. There is, for example, the story of one of the Department's Inspectors known familiarly as "Reg". For several years a pet buck deer had been a part of the scenery at the Ontario Fur Farm at Kirkfield. One fall morning at an early hour Reg was scouting around within the farm when he was suddenly attacked by this pet deer, and in his haste to get out of its way he tripped and fell. In a trice the deer was upon him, jabbing with

its antlers and scraping his body with its fore feet. The inspector grasped the antlers with all the strength he possessed and tried to hold off the maddened animal, in an effort to prevent himself from being gored to death. The minutes seemed hours, and the savagery of the attack was almost overpowering. His clothes were ripped, and those vicious tines had thrice pierced his stomach, but still he fought on. A sudden distraction caused the deer to halt for a moment and the inspector was able to crawl behind a tree and finally to stagger back to the farm dwellings. As a result of this unexpected encounter he spent almost three weeks in hospital and another three weeks recuperating.

Then there are the bear cubs, chummy and amusing little fellows, who will eat ice-cream cones and drink pop with as much gusto as the average boy. When young they are extremely playful and friendly, but must of necessity be closely confined. Perhaps they are fastened to a tree or a pole by a length of chain which permits of limited movement, but does allow them to wander round and round in what must be to them a "vicious circle." Soon they, too, grow up nursing a grouch against the fate which has confined them to a cage or anchored them to the same barren and unattractive spot. No longer are they quite so friendly, for the spirit of youth has departed and the snarling savagery of the wild is beginning to dominate them. At this stage they are becoming dangerous and the call goes out to have them destroyed.

Mr. G. E. Moore, writing in the *Missouri Conservationist*, tells a good story of a fox which a farmer adopted as a pet. "The animal," says the writer, "was taken when quite young and became very tame. It was kept chained to a dog kennel, and fed with bread and milk. After a time, it was noticed that the fox never seemed to eat while it was being watched. It was assumed that it did eat the food, however, because the pan was usually empty. This went on for several weeks before a thick mat of chicken feathers was found in the back of the kennel. The wily animal had been leaving the food in the pan to attract chickens within reach; the chickens were eating the bread and milk, and the fox was eating the chickens. The animal having become a nuisance had to be killed."

All this is just by way of suggesting that these "cute" baby animals are better left in their own environment. If it is obvious that, owing to wounds or other physical conditions, they are liable to die, temporary care is in order. They should, however, be released as soon as they are able to take care of themselves and while they are still "wild." The law of the jungle is harsh, but it is part of Nature's plan for the survival of the fittest, and every animal unnecessarily withdrawn from its natural environment means a loss in the wild life of the district.

Law Observance and Common Sense Will Reduce Accidents

The Atlantic Charter with its "Four Freedoms" established the basis of a new world order and signified the objectives for which the Allies

were fighting. It was an effective statement of democratic principles and ideals enunciated when the outlook for democracy was black and foreboding. Even in a democratic world, however, there is no freedom which allows a man absolute liberty to live his own life as he sees fit. Such freedom would result in chaos and anarchy, so in order that we might enjoy a maximum of security with a minimum of restriction, our lives are subject to certain well-established laws and ethics within which our social and economic systems function. The "Ten Commandments" represent the moral laws; while from the Common Law of England has evolved the Statutes which provide the order and security necessary to our way of life. Without these controlling factors there could be no freedom, and a general recognition of the importance of all laws—national and international—which have for their objective the peace and security of mankind would result in fewer heartaches and a larger measure of happiness throughout the world.

The conservation of our wild life resources, and the freedom to enjoy the recreational pleasures which these make possible, are largely dependant upon complete observance of the Game and Fisheries laws, and the practice of every safety measure which experience dictates and common sense urges. This is so obvious as to require little amplification, and yet it is necessary to continually remind the sportsman that the laws which control his sport are intended to preserve it, and protect those who participate.

The inspiration for this line of thought is a news item which appeared recently in one of our daily newspapers and bore the headline: "Gun in car goes off—kills man instantly." It is the tragic story of a man who, after finishing the morning's hunt, placed his loaded gun on the back seat of his car. The car stalled and he got out to push. While rocking the car the gun went off and killed him instantly. Recriminations would be out of place, but the moral is obvious.

It was to prevent such accidents, as well as to stop indiscriminate shooting from cars while driving along the highway, that the regulation prohibiting the carrying of loaded firearms in a car was incorporated in the Game and Fisheries Act.

The hunting season is well under way, and already there have been several fatal accidents, so we again remind our readers that those who ignore the restraining influence of the law and good common sense are inviting trouble.

The Problem of Protected Game

The problem of overstocked land or water areas is just as important in any conservation plan for improving wild life resources as are plans for the replenishment of depleted areas through restocking or natural development. An acre of land or water will furnish only so much food, and when the demand for this food, by such life as is dependant

upon it for sustenance, exceeds the supply, the saturation point has been reached and the way opened to disease and starvation.

We are reminded of this question of saturation by an article which appeared in an issue of *Harpers Magazine* entitled "Don't Waste the Game Crop." At first glance it might be assumed that such an article would be a warning against poaching, excessive bag limits, etc., but as a matter of fact it is a plea to avoid undue waste of game by taking in a legal way that surplus which annually dies on overstocked ranges through lack of food. "What would you think of a cattle rancher who harvested only half his annual beef 'crop year after year and kept the rest to increase until his herd destroyed the range and starved to death?" ask the writers in the opening paragraph.

What interests us particularly in the article is the intimation that the situation which seems to call for the taking of more game was brought about by too intensive and prolonged conservation measures. After detailing the deplorable state of affairs due to unbridled destruction, commercialism, etc., which almost eliminated much of America's game resources prior to the conservation area, the authors proceed, "And so the conservationists appeared in the nick of time. The public was converted. Legislators passed game laws. We established refuges, killed off such predators as coyotes, mountain lions, and wolves, and restocked areas where game had been killed out. We spent millions of dollars to restore northern breeding grounds for ducks. Newspapers, magazines, clubs, schools, Boy Scouts, Izaak Waltonites all preached the gospel of conservation."

"Game is like domestic stock in one respect. There is an annual crop, and if it isn't harvested herds and flocks eventually outstrip their food supply. Drastic protection of all game everywhere was necessary to restore the depleted breeding stock. It isn't necessary any longer. Harvesting of crops is now just as important as protection of breeding stock in maintaining a balance between the game population and its food supply, despite the fact that a nation with a fifty-year-old tradition of indiscriminate protection cannot bring itself to believe that there could possibly be too many deer in Michigan, too many elk in Jackson Hole, too many pheasant in South Dakota, or too many ducks in Western Washington."

The authors are careful to qualify the statement that drastic protective measures are no longer necessary, by this admission. "There is no general surplus of game yet. But there are hundreds of specific local surpluses which will develop into a general surplus if not harvested." In so far as it affects deer, protective measures of a drastic nature extending over a long period have created many local problems in various parts of the United States. Overcrowding of ranges creates food shortages, and this during a severe winter results in heavy mortality. "For instance," state the writers, "a few years ago the people of Colorado discovered that deer and elk in certain areas were starving by thousands on the threadbare winter range. Unwilling to see the animals killed, they shouted: 'Feed 'em hay'. The State of Colorado has spent almost \$200,000 feeding

them hay and other concentrates. But the deer couldn't live on such fare, for a deer digests hay about as well as you do. His natural food is browse — shrubs, bark, twigs and leaves. Pittman-Robertson studies indicate that a deer's digestive apparatus to function properly for any length of time needs a diet of 80 to 90 per cent. browse. This Spring (1942) the Colorado Game Department burned the carcasses of 2,400 dead deer near the feed grounds on the Gunnison area alone."

The deer population in the Fishlake Forest in Utah is stated to be at present about 60,000, which is double its normal winter capacity. As a result, food is at a premium and starvation is general. Fishlake bucks," says the article, "are so thin you can slit the hide and shake out the bones! Last year's winter loss on Fishlake was 42 animals per square mile on twenty-five per cent. of the range."

"In Malheur National Forest in Eastern Oregon," continues the article, "the deer range had been worn down to the fabric before Oregonians would agree that the herd should be cut. Even the presence of 1,200 dead fawns on six square miles wasn't evidence enough. The Forest Service sought relief from the State Game Commission, but it in turn had to wait for public support. It waited four years."

These illustrations are said to be typical of the conditions existing in certain game preserve areas throughout the country where absolute protection has been more or less assured and predators have been systematically destroyed.

Under somewhat similar circumstances the Federal Government found it necessary to kill off hundreds of buffalo in our National Parks, and the Provincial Government found it advisable to take frequent toll of the deer in Rondeau Park. Here it should be mentioned that the conservation measures and close seasons which have prevailed in Southwestern Ontario, and in many eastern counties, have resulted in restoring the herds in these sections to an abundance not equalled in the past quarter of a century. Deer in ever-increasing numbers are to be found all over the area. Because of this, it was deemed advisable to provide short open seasons this fall in certain townships, under modified conditions intended to prevent accidents and regulate the take, while at the same time exercising a measure of control.

Ontario has extensive areas of land set aside as sanctuary for game, and hunters have been entirely excluded from these areas, so that natural conditions, more or less, prevail. Under these conditions development is less spectacular — because Nature exercises a measure of control — but there is less loss through unnatural causes.

Those Souvenir Guns

Many of the men returning from the various war fronts of the world are bringing with them, as souvenirs and utility weapons, foreign guns of every make and description, and are beginning to enquire about

American or Canadian made ammunition to fit these weapons. Answering enquiries with regard to these foreign weapons the Western Cartridge Company has this to say:

"We would like to point out the extreme hazard that exists in firing weapons of this type unless their exact caliber is known and cartridges specifically adapted to them are available. There are many makes of foreign guns and an endless list of foreign calibers. These facts, together with the uncertainty of the condition of the weapons involved, make it impossible for us to give you a definite recommendation as to ammunition that can be used.

"The similarity of many European cartridges, the lack of complete caliber designation on many European arms, the question as to what, if any, proof tests foreign arms have been subjected to, and the difference in chamber pressures between foreign and American cartridges, account for the uncertainty surrounding the use of American ammunition in foreign weapons. Unless extreme caution and good judgment are exercised in the use of foreign-made arms, and the selection of ammunition to use in them, serious damage or personal injury may result."

The Hunting Camp

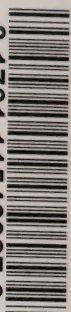
M. J. LAMB

I've a cabin built on a mountain crest
Neath tall oak trees, where we dream and rest,
My pals and I, when from round our feet
Drifts the delicate scent of arbutus sweet.
When wild honeysuckle, late in May,
Enchants with its fragrance and color gay,
The wily trout we essay to hook
From the tumbling, rock-strewn mount'n brook.

We find from the summer's blistering heat
In the mountain cabin a cool retreat.
Here is rest from the burdens of city life,
We forget for a time, our care and strife;
The oak leaves, rustling to and fro,
The brook's soft cadence, sweet and low,
In a crooning melody, peace imparts
To weary souls and tired hearts.

When autumn comes to the mountain top,
And the tall oak trees their acorns drop
On the roof, to roll to the ground and lie
Till the busy squirrels, scampering by
Shall store them away for the winter near,
We come again with our hunting gear,
And revel in beauty of hill and wood
In the glorious color of autumn's mood.

We watch from the windows the falling snow,
All snug and warm, tho' the winds may blow.
To hunt, or fish, or just to tramp
The wooded hills round the hunting camp,
Through the year we come, life gains new zest
In the cabin here on the mountain crest.



3 1761 11546987 6